

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. Prior to entry of this response, Claims 1-21 were pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 13, and 17 are independent. In the Office Action dated January 8, 2008, Claims 10-11, 17, and 20-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Claims 13-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101, and Claims 1-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). Claims 3, 10, and 17 were objected to as containing informalities. Following this response, Claims 1-21 remain in this application. Applicants hereby address the Examiner's rejections in turn.

I. Interview Summary

Applicants thank Examiner Todd for the courtesy of a telephone interview on February 25, 2008, requested by the undersigned to discuss the rejection of the current claims under 35 U.S.C. §§ 101, 102, and 112. During the interview, Applicants asserted that the cited reference did not anticipate the Claims. The Examiner stated that deleting a message as recited by the claims appeared to encompass preventing a message from being displayed to a user as recited by the cited reference. Applicants have amended independent Claims 1 and 13 to better address the Examiner's concern as discussed during the interview. No agreement was reached regarding patentability.

II. Change to Attorney Docket Number

Please note that the Attorney Docket Number for this application is now 60001.0392US01/MS300316.1.

III. Information Disclosure Statement

In the Office Action dated January 8, 2008, the Examiner stated that the Information Disclosure Statements filed on May 4, 2006, and August 23, 2006, failed to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(1). Applicants respectfully submit that the Information Disclosure Statements dated May 4, 2006, and August 23, 2006, did not require a list of patents, publications, applications, or other information submitted for consideration by the Office because they included statements regarding non-public use.

IV. Objection to the Claims

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to Claims 3, 10, and 17 as containing various informalities. Claims 3, 9, 10, and 17 have been amended to address these informalities and do not narrow the claimed subject matter. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments overcome this objection and add no new matter.

V. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 101

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claims 13-16 have been amended to recite a "computer-readable storage medium," and Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments overcome this rejection and add no new matter.

VI. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1, 10-11, 17, and 20-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as lacking antecedent basis and rejected Claims 10 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out

and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regard as their invention. Claims 1, 10-11, 17, and 20-21 have been amended, and Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments overcome this rejection and add no new matter.

VII. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,807,566 ("*Bates*"). Independent Claims 1 and 13 have been amended, and Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments overcome this rejection and add no new matter. Amended Claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over the cited reference for at least the reason that it recites, for example, "deleting the thread from the discussion group." Claims 13 and 17 each includes a similar recitation. Support for this amendment can be found in the specification at least on page 3, para. [0008], and page 9, para. [0030].

Regarding Claim 1, the Examiner stated that *Bates* teaches "a method for deleting threads from a discussion group". (See Office Action, page 6.) Claims 13 and 17 each includes a similar recitation. The Examiner further stated that *Bates* discloses retaining and displaying messages having a rating above a threshold. (See Office Action, page 6, citing *Bates*, col.5 line 10-24 and col. 5, line 47 - col. 6, line 7.) In contrast, Applicants respectfully submit that *Bates* nowhere discloses retaining or deleting messages. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that although *Bates* discloses that a message board may be configured to only display electronic messages having a message rating above a threshold rating, this disclosure does not anticipate deleting the thread from the message board entirely based on a lack of positive feedback. (See *Bates*, col. 5, lines 61-63.) Accordingly, while *Bates* discloses rating

posts on a message board and configuring the message board to display certain posts based on that rating, *Bates* does not disclose deleting or setting a date for deletion for threads that have not been rated as useful, as required by Claims 1, 13, and 17.

Bates does not anticipate the claimed invention because *Bates* at least does not disclose, "if at least one user has not rated at least one post as useful, then deleting the thread," as recited by Claim 1. Claims 13 and 17 each includes a similar recitation. Accordingly, independent Claims 1, 13, and 17 each patentably distinguishes the present invention over the cited reference, and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection of Claims 1, 13, and 17.

Dependent Claims 2-12, 14-16, and 18-21 are also allowable at least for the reasons described above regarding independent Claims 1, 13, and 17, and by virtue of their respective dependencies upon independent Claims 1, 13, and 17. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection of dependent Claims 2-12, 14-16, and 18-21.

VIII. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims. The preceding arguments are based only on the arguments in the Office Action, and therefore do not address patentable aspects of the invention that were not addressed by the Examiner in the Office Action. The claims may include other elements that are not shown, taught, or suggested by the cited art. Accordingly, the preceding argument in favor of patentability is advanced without prejudice to other bases of patentability. Furthermore, the Office Action contains a number of statements

reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 13-2725.

Respectfully submitted,
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